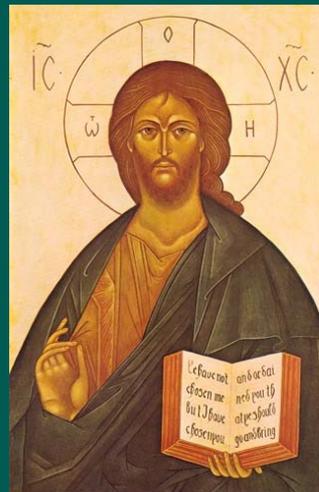


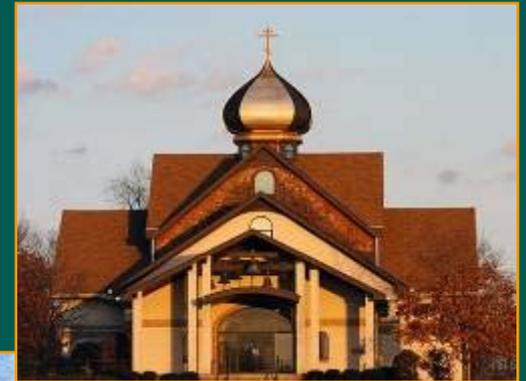
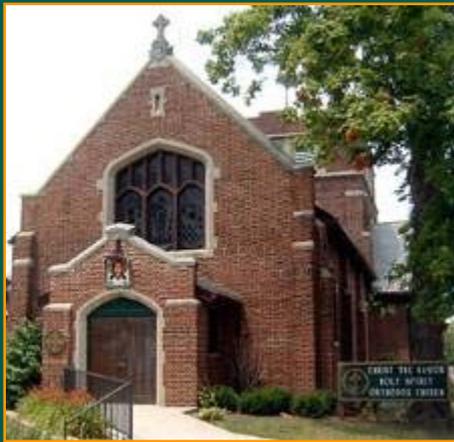
Introduction to Orthodox Christianity

A Three Session Class
for Inquirers



Class Purpose

Provide a basic introduction to Orthodox
Christianity



Questions We Will Answer

- What is the Orthodox Church?
- Where does it come from – and why have so many never heard of it?
- How is it similar to and different from Christian Churches with which you may be more familiar?
- What do people find here?
- Your specific questions.



Overview

Session Outline

- Session 1 - Who We Are
- Session 2 - What We Believe
- Session 3 - How We Live



Orthodox Christianity

Who We Are

Session 1



Orthodox Christian Church

- IS NOT
 - an institution or organization
- IS
 - a Living Organism –the people of God
 - As the people of God we:
 - *Gather* together in his name
 - *Share* a common faith in love of God
 - *Affirm* truth & fullness of their faith belief & experience
 - *Proclaim* the Good News of Christ in word and deed

An Orthodox Christian...

A person who lives according to the image of Jesus Christ and affirms the fullness of truth he reveals

Ortho	dox	Christ	ian
True or correct complete doctrine	Belief teaching doctrine	Jesus Christ in whom our faith is rooted	One who strives to live as Christ did

Jesus Christ

- DID NOT ...
 - Come to establish a religion, belief system or code of ethics.
- DID
 - Give us a model for living based on loving...
 - God with our very being
 - Others as we love ourselves
 - On this, Jesus Christ says, everything else hinges

Orthodox Christian Church

Origins

- Traces its origins to Jesus Christ and the apostles
- Born on day of Pentecost
 - 50 days after Christ's resurrection
 - when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles*
 - Apostles went throughout the world
 - proclaiming the Good News of the Risen Christ to all who would listen*
- Subsequently spread to every corner of the world
- Planted in North America by Orthodox missionaries
 - Alaska, 1794

Orthodox Church Today

- Throughout the world
 - 300,000,000 Orthodox Christians
- In North America
 - 2800 parishes, missions institutions and monasteries
- The Church continues to invite people to
 - Come and see the fullness of the faith
 - Embrace it as their own

Orthodox Christians

Attempt to serve God by:



Worship

Public “liturgy” & private prayer

Orthodox Christians

Attempt to serve God by:

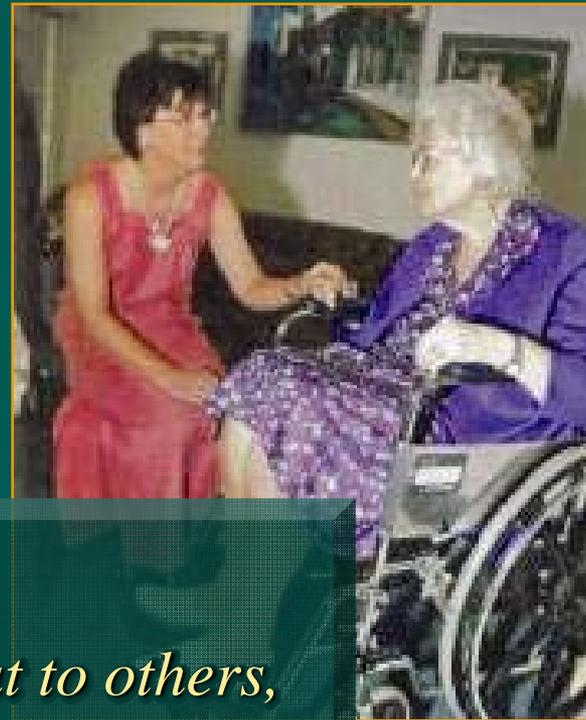


Fellowship

By interacting with others in the faith community and beyond

Orthodox Christians

Attempt to serve God by:



Discipleship

Fasting, almsgiving and reaching out to others, especially those in spiritual and material need

Orthodox Christians

Attempt to serve God by:



Stewardship

Wisely managing the gifts of time, talent and treasure with which God has blessed us.

Next Week

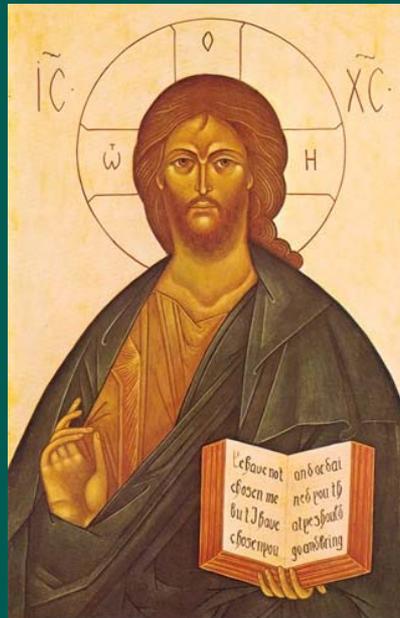
Session 2 – What We Believe

Questions?

Orthodox Christianity

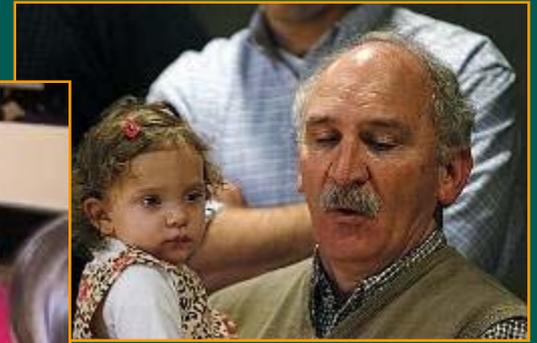
What We Believe

Session 2

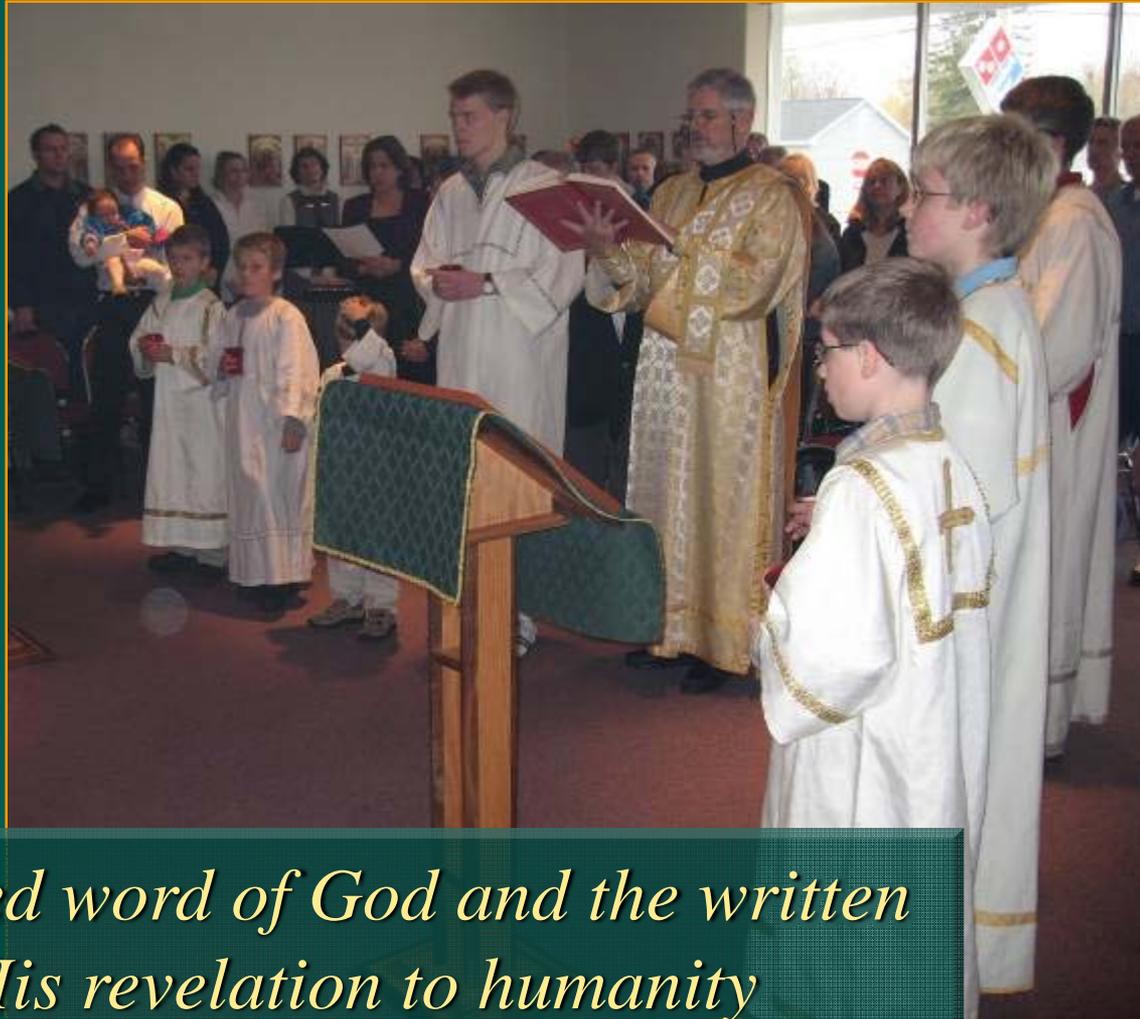


Topics

- Scripture
- Tradition
- Trinity
- The Church
- Salvation



Holy Scripture



The inspired word of God and the written record of His revelation to humanity

Holy Scripture

■ Old Testament

- Records the manner in which God prepared the world for the coming of His Son, Jesus Christ.

■ New Testament

- Completes and fulfills God's revelation...
- by proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord, God and Savior;
- as the very Word of God
- Who came to live in the midst of His people;
- and as the perfect, final and complete revelation of God to the world



Holy Tradition

That which is passed on or given over within the Church, from the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles until the present day

- Is...
 - the ongoing life of God's People
 - that which God's People have believed, lived, experienced, celebrated and shared at all times and in all places.
 - the living link that unites God's people in a common faith, life & experience.
- Includes...
 - all that is essential to God's revelation and necessary for our salvation

Holy Tradition

Consists of...

- Holy Scripture
- Prayer & liturgical worship
- Accepted creeds & acts of the early Church's councils
- Writings of the Holy Fathers
- Lives of the saints
- Artistic and musical expression of the Church

Holy Trinity

The one God is three separate and distinct Persons

Father, Son and Holy Spirit

- Each Person of the Trinity...
 - Shares fully and equally in the divine nature and will *AND*
 - Is infinite, perfect, all knowing, ever existing and eternally the same *AND*
 - Is perfectly united to the other Persons of the Trinity in love.



Holy Trinity *(cont'd)*

God the Father

- The source of all things
- Maker of Heaven and Earth
- And of all things visible and invisible

*Summarized in Nicene Creed, professed
unchanged since 4th century*

Holy Trinity *(cont'd)*

God the Son, Jesus Christ

- Sent by the Father into the world for our salvation
- Begotten of the Father before all ages
- Took on human nature & became man while not forsaking divine nature
- Crucified for us under Pontius Pilate
- and on the third day He arose again
- He shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead

*Jesus Christ is our Savior,
who leads humanity into God's kingdom*

Holy Trinity *(cont'd)*

God the Holy Spirit

- The Lord, the Giver of Life
- Proceeds from the Father
- Is worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son

The Holy Spirit fills us, sustains us and strengthens us in living a Christ-like life

The Church

The Church is...	Because...
ONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ It is one body with one Head, Jesus Christ■ It cannot be divided or separated because Christ cannot be divided or separated■ It does not possess numerous branches that, while similar, are not the same
HOLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ the Holy Spirit dwells in God's people as they respond to His call to salvation and eternal life
CATHOLIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ the Church is whole, complete, lacking in nothing & universal
APOSTOLIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ It maintains and continues in the apostles' teaching, mission, ministry and experience

Salvation

- The process by which we prepare to enjoy eternal life with God.
- Ends our separation from God, enabling us to begin a new life in accordance with His will.

Salvation

For those who...	Spending eternity in His presence is...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Love God	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Paradise■ Heaven■ A “fire that purifies”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Hate God or,■ Are indifferent to Him or,■ Refuse to place their faith in Him	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Torment■ A “fire that burns”

Salvation

- Is ultimately attained through an active faith
 - Free to accept or reject
- By accepting faith we commit ourselves to:
 - Living our faith
 - Putting it into action
 - Recognizing God's presence in others – even the least of the brothers

Next Week

Session 3 – How We Live

Questions?

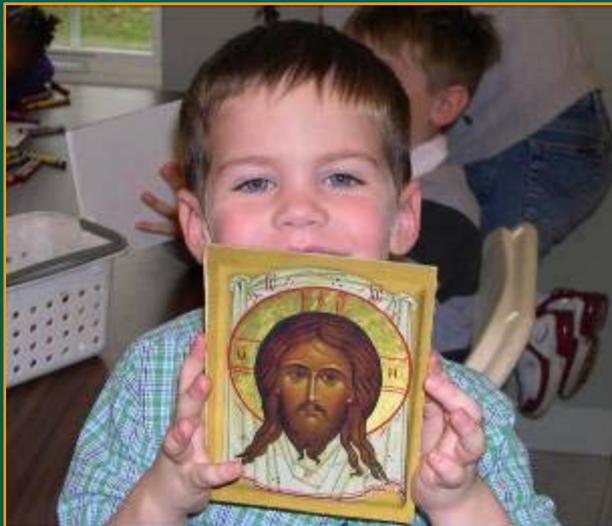
Orthodox Christianity

How We Live

Session 3

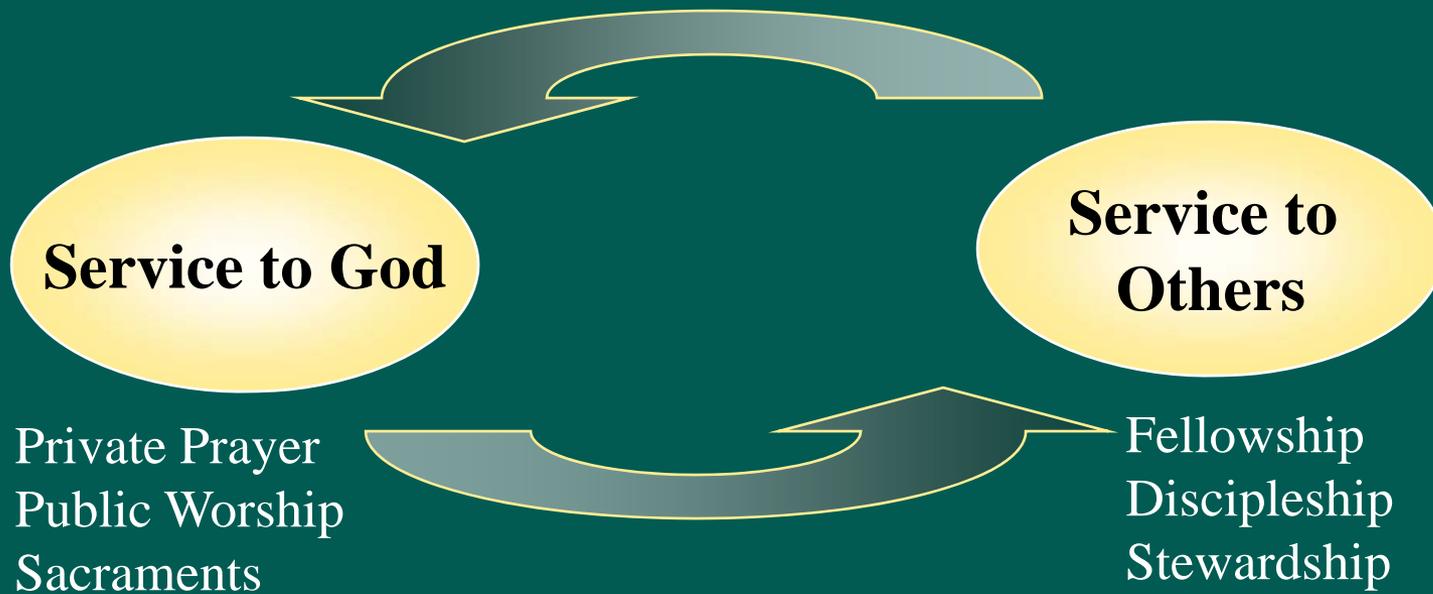
Service to God

Service to Others



How We Live

Offering service to others is rooted in service we offer to God in prayer and worship



Service to God

Private prayer is essential

- We communicate and commune with God personally
 - To discern God's will for our lives
 - To obtain the means to live his will
 - To praise and thank him for the blessings He has given us
 - To bring our burdens before Him while asking for strength to live our faith even in times of adversity

Service to God

Above all God's people are a worshipping people

Liturgical Worship is...

- the public proclamation of God as Lord
- the common action, or liturgy, of God's people



Service to God

A photograph of a priest in ornate gold and black vestments performing a ritual with two young men in white and red vestments. The priest is in the center, looking down at a book or object. The young men are on either side, also looking down. The background shows a church interior with wooden paneling and a decorative archway.

The Divine Liturgy (Eucharist) is:

- The central act of worship
- During which we:
 - Proclaim God's word as revealed in scripture
 - And respond in Thanksgiving through the reception of Holy Communion – the body and blood of Jesus Christ

Service to God

Sacraments

Our Sacraments	<i>bring God's presence into our lives as we:</i>
Baptism & Chrismation	Become members of Christ's Body
Holy Communion	Proclaim Christ's death, Resurrection and Second Coming
Confession	Be forgiven by & reconciled with God and His People
Marriage	Share His love and the commitments it entails
Ordination	Dedicate our lives and our work to Him in specialized service
Holy Unction	Receive His healing grace

Service to God

Sacraments



Baptism & Chrismation
Become members of Christ's Body

Service to God

Sacraments



Holy Communion

Proclaim Christ's Death, Resurrection
and Second Coming

Service to God

Sacraments

Confession

Be forgiven by & reconciled with
God and his people.



Service to God

Sacraments



Marriage

Share His love and the commitments it entails

Service to God

Sacraments



Ordination

Dedicate our lives
and our work to Him
in specialized service

Service to God

Sacraments

Holy Unction

Receive his healing grace

“...unto the healing of soul and body.”



Service to Others



One cannot be a Christian independent of others

Volunteer and child at Hogar Rafael Ayau Orphanage
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Service to Others

Fellowship

- The Church is God's people who:
 - Are united in a common faith, life and journey to the kingdom of God
 - Share their common union in the Christian community
- The roots of fellowship are:
 - Mutual love & respect
 - Hospitality
 - Acknowledgement that, while we belong to Christ, we also are members of one another



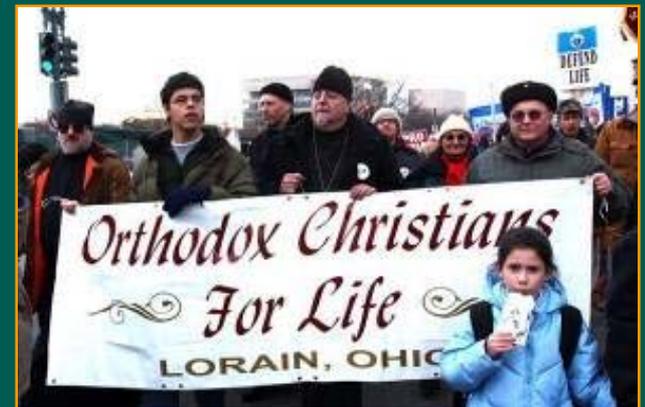
Service to Others (cont'd)

Discipleship

A disciple is more than a follower...

...rather a co-worker with Christ... bringing the Good News of salvation to all who listen and receive it.

- Discipleship includes:
 - Strengthening our faith
 - Reading, studying, discussing
 - Living out our faith
 - In words and actions
 - Sharing our faith with others
 - Especially those who have yet to hear the fullness of the Good News of Jesus Christ



Service to Others (cont'd)

Stewardship

... wisely managing the countless gifts bestowed by God.

- Time
- Talent
- Treasure



Summary

What Do People Find Here?

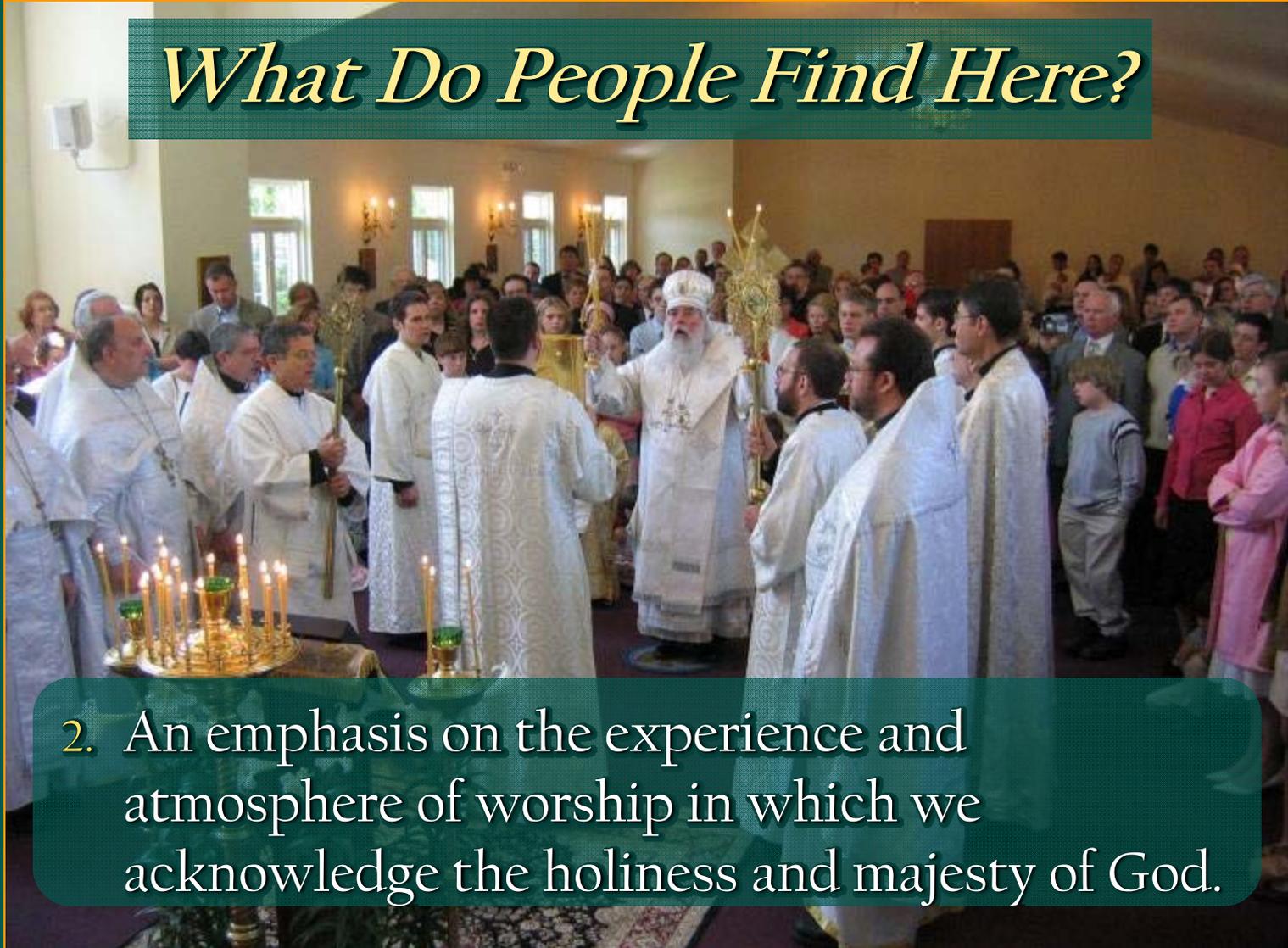
1. Doctrinal integrity and continuity with the original apostolic "deposit" that does not shift with the times or with prevailing fads.



Church of Holy Sepulchre
Jerusalem

Summary

What Do People Find Here?



2. An emphasis on the experience and atmosphere of worship in which we acknowledge the holiness and majesty of God.

Summary

What Do People Find Here?



3. An over-all Christian "world view" that is meant to be lived out as a "way of life."

Thank You For Your Time and Your Attention!

St Nicholas Orthodox Church
9650 Johnnycake Ridge Rd
Mentor, Ohio 44060

Fr Andrew Clements, Rector

frandrew@saintnicholas-oca.org

440-946-9571 (Phone)

*Diocese of the Midwest
Orthodox Church in America*